WILLIAM DENTON MOULTON

Two years after the Elders had taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Thomas Moulton and his wife Sarah, their first son was born. Born 17 July 1843, he was called William Denton Moulton after his grandfather William Moulton and his mother's family. There were in the family then two sisters, Sarah Marsh Moulton (daughter of Thomas and his first wife Esther Marsh) and Mary Ann.

As William grew and waxed strong he loved to explore and roam the area of his birth, Irchester, Northamptonshire, England. Two more sons and two daughters were born to this family in England and together they all went to their meetings to learn the truths of the Gospel. William was baptized in February 1855.

When Willaim was 13 years of age, in 1856, his father announced to the family that it was time for them to get ready to go to America and join the Saints in Zion. Excitement was high in the Moulton household. The spirit of adventure was manifest as plans were made, especially when mother Sarah produced a fruit jar with much of the needed money for the journey. Because Sarah was expecting another child her husband thought it unwise to leave until after the birth, but changed his mind when a blessing was given to Sarah and the family that they would all arrive safely at their destination. They began preparing for their six-month journey.

On the third of May, 1856, the family bade farewell to their friends and homeland and sailed on the ship "Thornton." There were 764 persons on board. Two weeks after the ship left Liverpool they ran into icebergs. Tossed about among the bergs they were still very close to Liverpool after two weeks on the water. When six weeks had passed on the water, the family grew with the birth of Charles Alma.

Upon arrival in New York they embarked by rail to Winter Quarters where the family were united with other Saints busily getting ready to travel west. The Moulton family was assigned to the handcart company of Captain James Willie. It was late summer and the Saints were advised to not start west for fear of an early winter. But so great was their desire and love of adventure they started west. Snow came early, the roads were bad and supplies became low. Had President Brigham Young not sent scouts and food as they approached the Utah Territory they would have all perished.

The Moulton family located in Provo but stayed only a short time. From Provo they moved to the Heber Valley where they soon became one of the most influential families in that valley. Three more sons blessed this family in Utah; Thomas Denton was born in Provo, and John Ephriam and George Franklin were born in Heber.

Reaching manhood amid the struggles of pioneer life, William became a member of the Black Hawk Army. Indians were numerous and a great menace, stealing many horses and cattle.

When William was 22 years old he was married to Mary Lavina Lee on 24 July 1865 by Joseph B. Murdoch. Three years later they went to the Endowment House to be sealed for time and eternity.

Mary Lavina Lee was also a pioneer of English origin. She was born near Barnsby, Wesperdale, Yorkshire, England, 26 August 1848. After joining the Church she left for America on the ship "Amazon" and continued by rail to St. Joseph, Missouri. There her family joined a wagon party and slowly wended their way across the plains. Spending her sixteenth summer on the plains Mary did many things to maintain happiness and love in the company.

Soon after the young couple were married William was sent to Florence, Nebraska to help bring immigrants to the valley of the Rockies. One year after his return, with crops failing and living conditions poor, he went to work cutting ties for the Union Pacific Railroad which was then being built.

The young couple moved from Heber City nine miles north, just south and east of the Ontario Drain Tunnel to a ranch known as Ross' Hollow (Moultonville and Elkhorn later allied). A branch of the Church was formed in the area and William was sustained as presiding Elder.

The beef and milk route was contracted to William from the Ontario Mining Company and he built up a prosperous business. In a business way he was a great influence for good to the surrounding territory, buying hay and stock and employing men in need of work. Many times he was pointed out as the ideal man in the community.

When Mary and William had been married seven childless years William was urged by the General Authorities to take a second wife. Mary was reluctant to share her husband. But on a visit to the Endowment House she was told in a blessing that children would be given to her if she would give her consent to a second wife. She did give her consent and as the story goes she went with William while he courted Mary Ann Davis, daughter of William Davis who lived a mile away. They were married 15 December 1873 by Daniel B. Wells in the Endowment House. In the eighth year of William and Mary's married life, both wives gave birth to sons. Mary later had two other sons and two daughters, five children in all; William Thomas, Orson Lee, Sarah Ellen, Ranch and Bertha Elizabeth. Mary Ann had four sons and one daughter; William Davis, Moroni Davis, Thomas Davis, Elizabeth and Hyrum.

There was much happiness and joy in the family and the big rock home that was provided for them. But when William was 40 years of age he passed away from the effects of pneumonia on the 14th of January 1863. He is buried in the Heber City Cemetary and both of his wives are by his side.

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